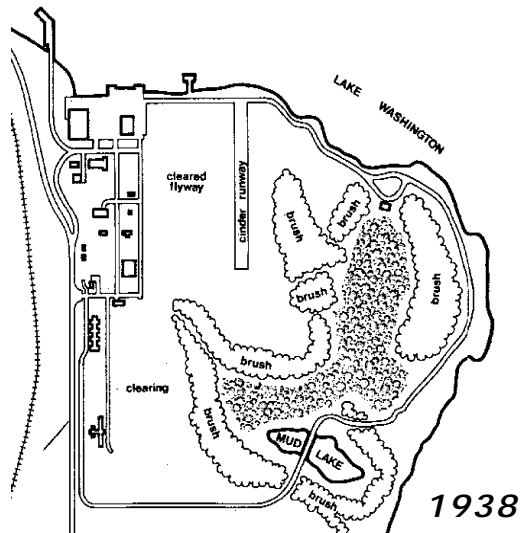
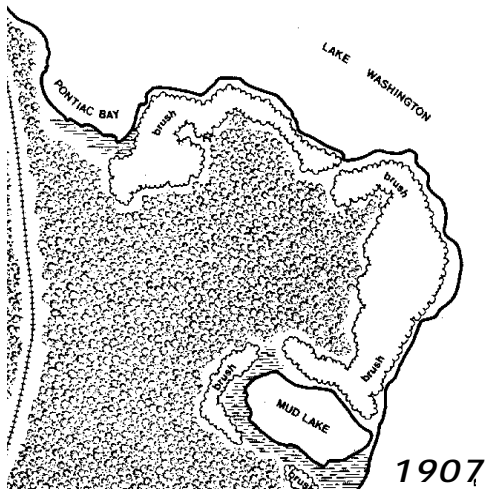


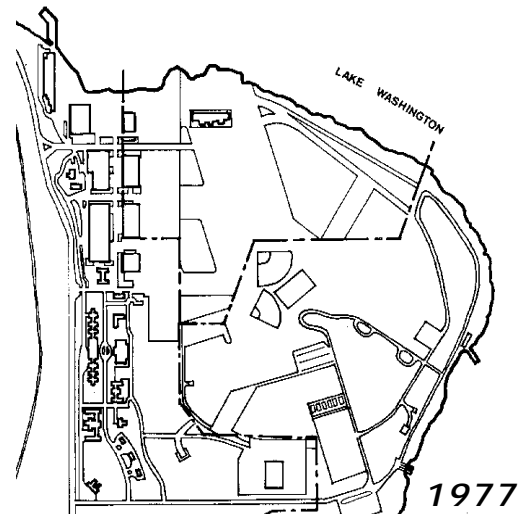
# Report to the Mayor and Seattle City Council



## Sand Point Blue Ribbon Committee

Charles Royer, Chair

February 1999





**EXECUTIVE  
SUMMARY**

This report presents the findings and recommendations of the Sand Point Blue Ribbon Committee (BRC), charged with conducting a comprehensive review and assessment of the Sand Point/Magnuson Park peninsula, including planning, operations, management and financing elements. The Committee was formed in response to calls for a reexamination of the Sand Point project—a fresh and comprehensive look at the current situation and recommended future direction.

**VISION FOR AN EXPANDED MAGNUSON PARK:  
A MILLENNIUM GIFT TO THE REGION**

Our vision for Magnuson Park begins with restoration of the land. A magnificent open space and its mile-long shoreline, long ago called to serve its country in war, now in peace must be returned to its natural beauty. In our priorities, the land comes first, the historic structures of national significance come second, and the rich mix of uses and user groups comes third. Our first recommendation, then, is to integrate Sand Point within Magnuson Park and begin the restoration of this expanded Park as a Millennium gift to the region — a single bold proposal for immediate action to underscore our commitment to environmental restoration and stewardship. Build the natural area as contemplated in the Citizens Plan, bringing back to life a magnificent lake, wetlands, habitat and streams. Restore the contours of the land, grow back the lush vegetation, and let the Park become for the region, a gift of the light, land and water of Seattle's Millennium celebration.

**PARK DESIGN**

The Magnuson Park Peninsula should be unified and restored, with its structures treated as “buildings in a park.” A Park design should be developed for the newly expanded Park, taking into account future plans for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and U.S. Department of Interior's Northwest Fisheries Research Center properties. The Citizens Plan should serve as the base plan or “core vision” for the design, which should also address important issues including connection to the Burke-Gilman trail; safety and security needs; review of locations for sportsfields, the off-leash area, and boat launch and moorage facilities; siting for potential anchor tenants; and integration of housing units with other uses. The Committee recommends that the City take immediate action to:

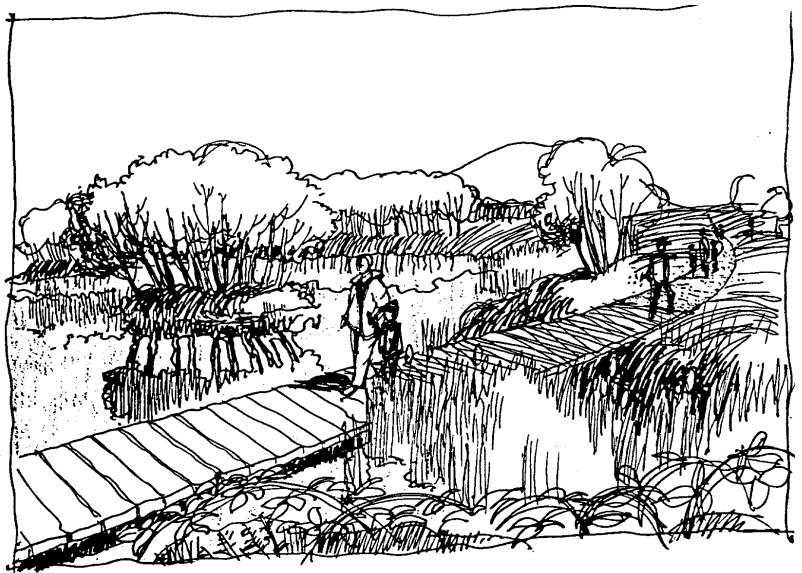
- ➔ Provide for public review and comment on the core plan — in close cooperation with the community and the newly reconstituted Magnuson Park Advisory Board.
- ➔ Convene a regional inter-agency Working Group on Lake Washington shoreline use and preservation – to assess recreation, facility and open space needs and constraints.
- ➔ Address transportation and parking issues – to the site and within it.

## PARK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The BRC recommends that Magnuson Park and the former Naval Station at Sand Point be managed by the City's Parks and Recreation Department as a single site, with its status elevated within the Department to that of other regional facilities such as the Zoo and the Aquarium. The City should also assume responsibility for major capital improvements needed by the City-owned buildings. Immediate recommended next steps are to:

- ➔ Initiate discussions with the President of the University of Washington — to share information about the University's needs and plans, and to discuss the future of the University's properties.
- ➔ Improve relations with NOAA — work cooperatively with NOAA to develop mutually acceptable solutions to better manage the Sand Point peninsula.
- ➔ Improve relations with the community and establish formal communication and oversight mechanisms — solicit community input on Park proposals and plan amendments early in the decision making process, with public hearings held on major decisions.
- ➔ Reconstitute the Magnuson Park Advisory Board — the Mayor in consultation with the City Council should appoint a Magnuson Park Advisory Board (MPAB) and Board Chair to advise the City on major planning, management and policy issues at the Park. The Board should include community representatives, as well as experts in law, finance, real estate, property management, park management and landscape architecture.

Management of the City-owned buildings intended for arts, culture and educational uses should be accomplished through a contract with a not-for-profit organization. This entity will be responsible for managing, operating, marketing and scheduling activities in the buildings, in accordance with an operating agreement with the City and the guidelines delineated in this report. The objective of this arrangement is for the City-owned buildings to be operated and managed by an independent, efficient and business-oriented non-profit organization, that will be insulated from politics and able to act entrepreneurially. The City should proceed immediately with development of a request for qualifications and proposal (RFQ/P) from interested non-profit organizations.



## PARK OPERATIONS AND USE

To maximize public use of the Park, there should be a mix of structured activities (performances, lectures, classes) and unstructured activities (museums, libraries, galleries, exhibits). Building space should be used for resident and temporary uses (including performances, classes, exhibits), with a majority of the space allocated for temporary uses.

Anchor tenants will attract people to the Park and provide focus, stability, interest and excitement. Concurrent with the Park design process the City should explore the interest of various established arts, cultural, education and environmental institutions in locating at the Park. Appropriate anchor tenants are those with missions that match or complement that of Magnuson Park. However, a major lesson learned at Fort Mason has been to proceed slowly with agreements for resident tenants. The pressure to fill building spaces should be tempered, to prevent assigning spaces that could later be put to a higher and better use. Until the not-for-profit management organization is established, the City should be careful about making long-term commitments. In the short-term, the Parks Department should focus on maintaining and enhancing the schedule of special events and community activities, so that the public can continue to be served and community awareness of the site can be maintained.

In addition to the policy recommendations presented in this report, the City Parks Board should review and advise the Parks Department on guidelines for the use of Magnuson Park. Use issues that should be addressed by the Parks Board include off-leash areas, boat launch requirements, sportsfield use, criteria for building use, commercial uses and lease terms and lease rates.

## PARK FUNDING

Funding the Park design improvements recommended in this report will be expensive. It will require a significant commitment of funds by the City, which can in turn be used to leverage state and federal grants, and private funding. The Mayor and City Council should identify a long-term phasing plan and a long-term, stable funding source to enable significant public investment in a revitalized Magnuson Park. In the short-term, the BRC recommends funding for a number of projects that will establish a framework for the Park's future success:

- ➔ Mud Lake restoration — this bold, visible step is needed to show the City's commitment to action, to improvement at Magnuson Park.
- ➔ Responsible building preservation and asset maintenance — immediate building maintenance needs, such as roof repair, should be undertaken now to protect the public's investment and forestall greater expense in the future.
- ➔ Continued special events programming — to serve the public, make best use of the facility and maintain the visibility and positive momentum that has been created.

- ➔ Additional Seattle Conservation Corps funding — to undertake pilot projects at Magnuson Park, including removal of unnecessary fences, minor demolition, trail construction and shoreline restoration.
- ➔ Building occupancy and regulatory flexibility — the City's Department of Construction and Land Use (DCLU) should allow occupancy of Sand Point's structures where life safety is not at risk. This regulatory flexibility will provide near-term access to the site for many organizations and can increase operating revenues significantly.
- ➔ New entrance design and construction — proceed with design and construction of a new, more pleasing Park entrance.
- ➔ Building 30 improvements — to make about 50,000 square feet habitable for some two dozen non-profit groups.
- ➔ City commitments to fund housing programs — the City has been a good partner in this program, and should continue to honor its commitments, including forthcoming requests for operating support.
- ➔ Branch library development — request that the Seattle Public Library Board consider funding a branch library at Magnuson Park
- ➔ Program operations proposed by the Sand Point community — interim use (assuming use of the buildings "as is") could begin in 1999 with funding for a staff coordinator.



## CITIZENS PLAN

**RECOMMENDED BY THE BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE AS THE  
BASE PLAN FOR THE MAGNUSON PARK DESIGN PROCESS**



### NOTE:

The Citizens Plan was prepared for the Citizens Sand Point Planning Association on behalf of the Sand Point Community Liaison Committee, and is used here by permission of the Sand Point Community Liaison Committee.

The Citizens Plan has been recommended by the BRC as the base plan, to be modified in the Park Design process. See pages 4-7 in the report for a discussion of recommended Park Design issues.